

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Polymer Manufacturing Corp

Nevada Management Assistance Partnership

Polymer Manufacturing Corporation Sticks To Plan To Eliminate Waste

Client Profile:

Polymer Manufacturing Corporation, founded in 1979 in Moundhouse, Nevada, is a subsidiary of Polymer Engineering Corporation, located in Oxnard, California. The company manufactures polyurethane products including Duramix(R), used primarily by the automotive repair industry, Dynamix(R), industrial adhesives, and Vettech(R), used for horse and bovine hoof repair. In 2000, the company had 75 employees and occupied over 75,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehouse space.

Situation:

Polymer Manufacturing Corporation (PMC), a profitable and growing company, still felt there had to be opportunities to reduce product motion waste and improve employee productivity. At the time, the company's raw materials were received in one warehouse, batch processed in another, and packaged in a third. PMC departmentalized all the processes and equipment; thus, every time a new order was placed, forklifts and endless paperwork were set in motion--most of it non-value-added motion. The company contacted the Nevada Management Assistance Partnership (MAP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, in early 2001 to help get a handle on waste management.

Solution:

MAP initially invited PMC's senior managers to participate in a one-day workshop, Lean 101 (Principles of Lean Manufacturing). MAP showed PMC how to identify motion waste for products and people. MAP also provided tools for PMC employees to help implement workplace organization using the 5S principles. After the training, PMC's executives began formulating a program that included action plans, new responsibilities, and, most importantly, employee involvement. Company teams began chipping away at waste in various plant locations, including the packing area. Time-consuming and inventory-intensive steps found to be unnecessary were eliminated. Polymer employees who bagged products had to walk to another area to get product instructions and packaging labels. By placing the materials in one point-of-use storage area, employees saved themselves wasted motion and upped their productivity; simply mounting the taping machine in the shipping area next to the bagger and feeder saved even more time. PMC took a strategic approach to bulk sales by offering a price reduction for customers buying a complete pallet of product so that the shrink-wrapped products on pallets didn't have to be disassembled for smaller

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orders. Continuous improvement efforts in 2001 led to tremendous savings in floor space, fewer employees dedicated to product lines, and a tripled annual profit.

Results:

Reduced floor space by 50 percent.

Tripled profits.

Testimonial:

"The Nevada Management Assistance Partnership is a tremendous resource--especially for small companies that cannot afford a large technical staff. They saved us a huge amount of money. MAP's lean manufacturing training was a catalyst for us."

Paul Gossi, Plant Manager